GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
FINANCE
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:453
ANSWERED ON:23.12.2005
TAX PAYERS
Chavda Shri Harisinh Pratapsinh

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the estimated number of income-tax payers as on date;

(b) whether the number of tax payers has decreased during each of the last three years as compared to the increase in the population of tax payers during the same period;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) steps proposed to be taken to educate the public for paying Income Tax and also file the Income Tax Returns;

(e) whether the outstanding amount of tax of the taxpayers is continuously increasing;

(f) if so, the details thereof during the last three years in this regard; and

(g) the steps taken to recover the outstanding amount of tax?

Answer

FINANCE MINISTER (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM)

(a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f) and (g): A statement is laid on the table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f) and (g) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NUMBER 453 DUE FOR ANSWER ON 23RD DECEMBER 2005.

(a) According to statistics maintained by Income Tax Department, the number of Income-tax assessees as on 31st October 2005 is 3.02 crores.

(b) No, sir. The number of Income-tax assessees is increasing continuously. The figures for the last three years are as follows:-

Financial year ending	Number of assessees (in crores)
31st March 2003	3.00
31st March 2004	3.02
31st March 2005	3.08

(c) Does not arise in view of (b) above.

(d) It has been the constant endeavour of the Government to educate the public to pay their Income-tax and file their returns. Some of the steps taken in this regard are as follows:-

i. Public awareness campaigns through print and electronic media to educate the public regarding their responsibility for filing of returns, payment of taxes and consequences of non-compliance of these obligations.

ii. Establishment of call centre, known as Aaykar Sampark Kendra (ASK) accessible from all over India through phone for various queries of taxpayers

iii. Help Centres have been established at many cities to educate and encourage small taxpayers to file their return of income.

iv. Helplines are already functioning for redressal of public grievances.

v. The Department's web-site www.incometaxindia.gov.in provides various material and information aimed at educating and helping the public.

vi. Publication of booklets titled "Taxpayers Information Series" for benefit and information of the taxpayers.

(e) Yes, sir.

(f) The outstanding amounts of tax at the end of last three financial years were as under:-

Financial Year	Amount of tax outstanding(In Rs. crore)
2002-03	72,290
2003-04	87,885
2004-05	98,912

(g) Apart from the statutory steps being taken for recovery of outstanding tax dues as prescribed under the Income Tax Act (including attachment of bank account, debtors, etc, attachment and sale of immovable property, etc) the following special measures are also being taken to expedite recovery of direct tax arrears:-

i. Monitoring of recovery of arrears in large cases by a Task Force.

ii. Identification of cases involving substantial amount of arrears pending before Commissioners (Appeals) and ITAT and requesting these authorities to dispose off such appeals early so that the demand can be collected during the current financial year itself.

iii. Requesting the President of ITAT not to allow stay of demand beyond 180 days as prescribed in section 254(2A) of the Income-tax Act.

iv. Requesting Settlement Commission to dispose off high-demand cases expeditiously.